



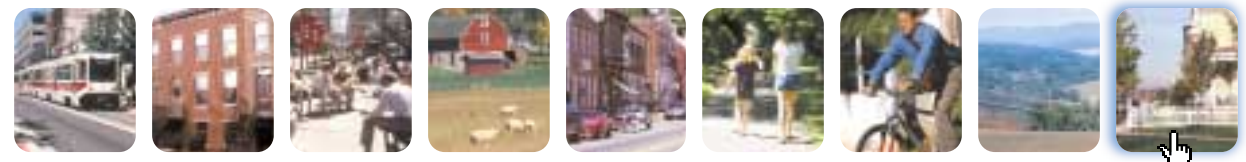
Americans are seeing sprawl hurt their quality of life. They want something better.

Smart Growth America is a new coalition promoting a better way to grow; one that protects open space, revitalizes neighborhoods, keeps housing affordable, and makes communities more livable.

People want smart growth, and they're saying so—in polls, in the market, and at the ballot box. Working together, we can all make smart growth happen.

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CHAPTER ONE

Americans' Attitudes about Growth are Changing

For most Americans, these are good times. The Information Age has spurred tremendous economic growth. Earnings are rising for people of all income levels, homeownership is at historic highs and unemployment is at its lowest level in a generation.

To keep up, our communities have also grown. In their rush to accommodate shifts in jobs and population, many towns and cities have expanded at a breakneck pace, leading to runaway sprawl. Americans are seeing their communities change in more ways than they ever bargained for. New sprawl tends to sit atop what was once forests, farmland, flood plains and scenic landscapes. Growing demand for roads, sewers and schools is leading to higher taxes. New jobs at the fringes of metro areas are disconnected from places where people live, generating more traffic.

Far from just a suburban or rural concern, poorly planned sprawl is also threatening the quality of life in urban communities. As subsidies for sprawl fuel a migration away from cities, many urban neighborhoods and their residents have been left behind. Even as the economy has boomed, opportunities in low-income neighborhoods remain scarce.

As people strive to improve the livability of their neighborhoods and towns, they are getting fed up with traffic, rising taxes, the loss of open space, and the lack of affordable housing. More and more, they're looking for alternatives that will deliver better growth and a better quality of life. They are demanding smarter growth.

Smart Growth America is seeking to make smart growth a reality. We define smart growth as growth that protects open space, revitalizes neighborhoods, makes housing more affordable and improves community quality of life. And we are not alone. From urban reinvestment efforts in Oakland, California to farmland preservation programs in the Bluegrass region of Kentucky, proponents of smart growth are waging a battle against unreasonable haphazard sprawl. And people are expressing their dissatisfaction with sprawl in numerous ways. For example:

► **AMERICANS SUPPORT ALTERNATIVES TO SPRAWL** A **Smart Growth America** poll conducted in September 2000 shows that Americans strongly support both the idea of smart growth and the strategies necessary to implement it.

- **USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS SKYROCKETING** Since 1997, use of public transportation has grown faster than driving, and this trend has shown no signs of letting up.
- **VOTERS ARE SUPPORTING SMARTER GROWTH** In the 1998 elections, voters considered 240 ballot initiatives nationwide to protect open space, manage development and otherwise implement smart growth policies, and 72 percent of these measures were approved.

All of these trends point to one thing: people are changing their minds about growth and they want something done about it. It is time for our

community, business and political leaders to start making smart growth happen.

THE SMART GROWTH AMERICA POLL
In September 2000, *Smart Growth America* commissioned the opinion research firm Belden, Russonello & Stewart to conduct a poll of Americans’ attitudes toward growth issues. Interviews were conducted with 1,007 adults age 18 or older between September 7 and September 10, 2000. The results of these phone interviews were weighted by gender, age, region and race to achieve a representative sample.

Altogether, 78 percent of those surveyed said they favored smart growth. This was in response

to the following question: “The term Smart Growth refers to giving priority to improving services, such as schools, roads, affordable housing and public transportation in existing communities rather than encouraging new housing and commercial development and new highways in the countryside. With this in mind, would you favor or oppose smart growth policies in your state?” Only 16 percent of respondents were opposed.

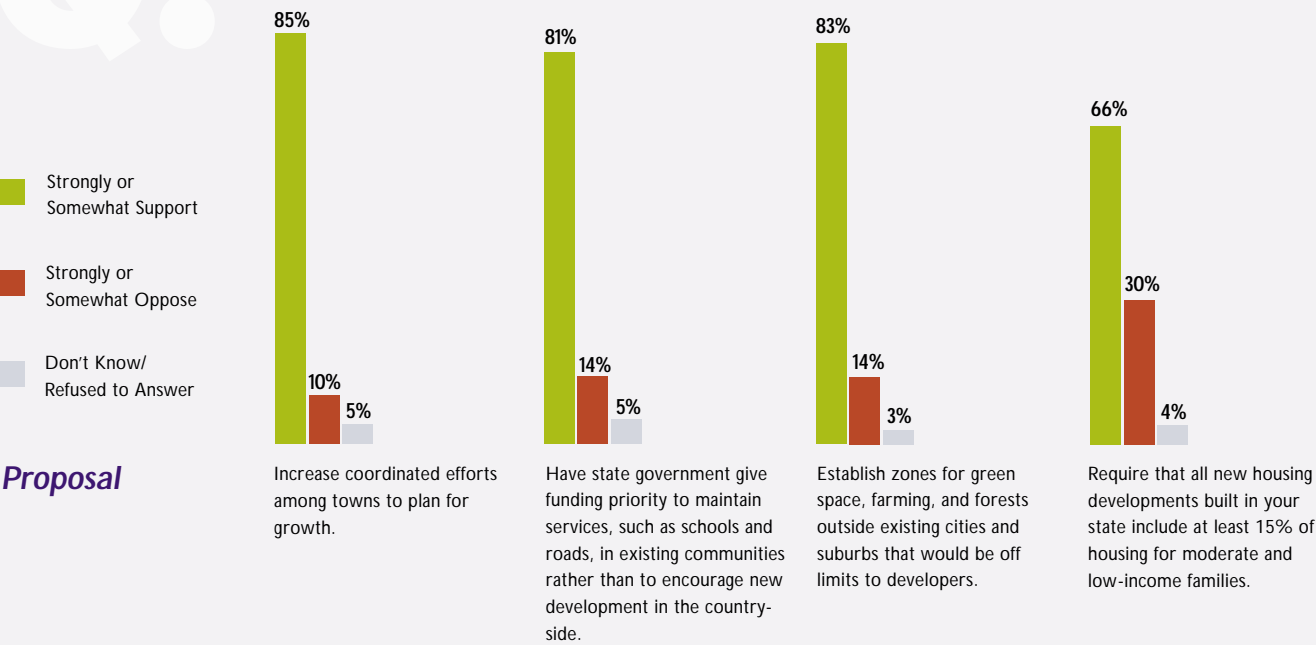
To test the robustness of this response, we asked essentially the same question a different way. When asked “Now, thinking about your state, is there a need to do more or to do less to manage and plan for new growth and development in

your state?” On this question, 76 percent of those surveyed felt that more should be done. Only 13 percent felt that less should be done.

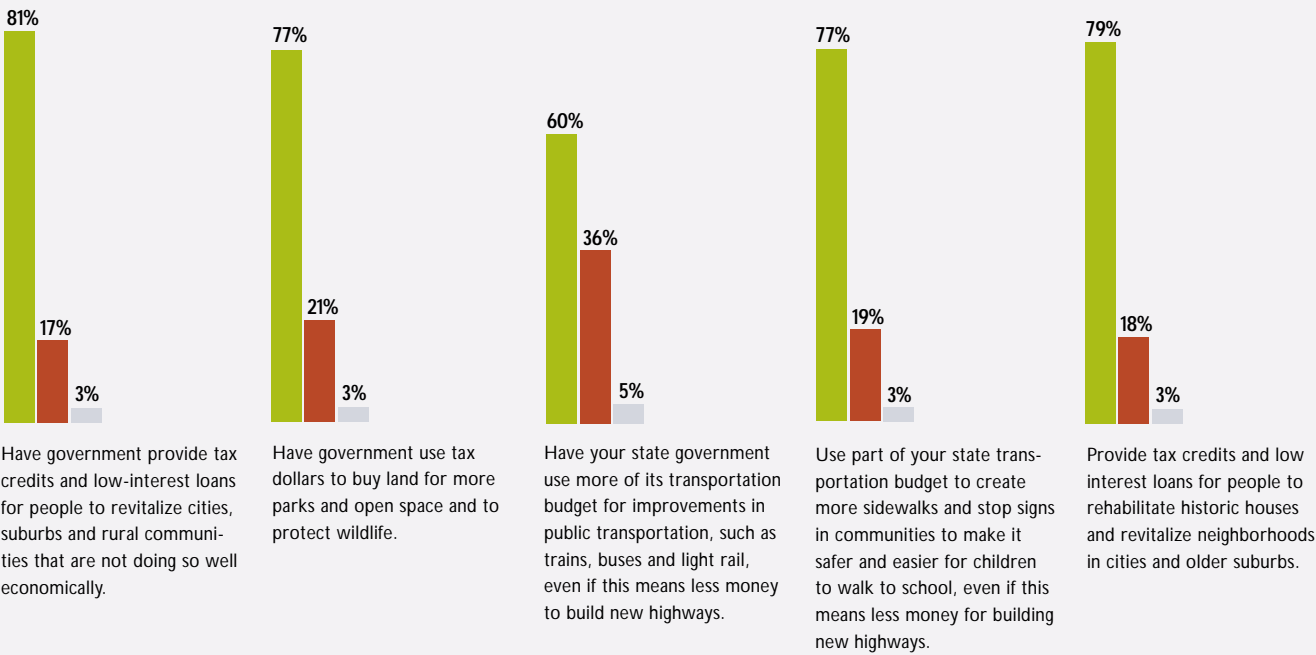
More important than these general attitudes, however, were responses to some of the specific policies used in communities around the country to implement smarter growth. Respondents were asked if they supported or opposed specific development policies. The results are in the chart below.

These results show that there are high levels of support for the policies needed to make smart growth happen. Overwhelming majorities of people responded that they support coordinated

“Here are some proposals on development and land use policy in your state. For each one, please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the proposal.”



Support for Smart Growth Policies



planning, open space conservation, more affordable housing, alternatives to driving, tax credits and priority funding for established and low-income neighborhoods, and historic preservation. Even where questions were phrased to present clear trade-offs, such as more funding for transit instead of new roads, supporters outnumbered opponents by large margins.

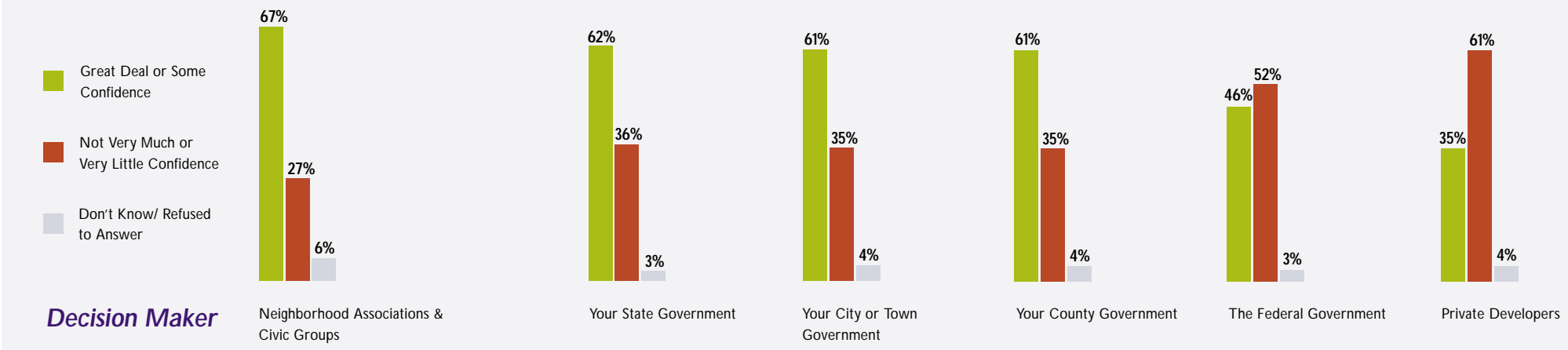
The poll also asked a series of questions on transportation. It asked people, “Thinking about the area where you live, has traffic over the last three years gotten better, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?” Fifty-four percent of people replied that traffic had gotten worse, 37 percent reported that it stayed about the same, and 4 percent said that it had gotten better.

To get more insight into how people think about transportation solutions, respondents were asked about specific strategies: “Which of the following proposals is the best long-term solution to reducing traffic in your state? Build new roads; Improve public transportation, such as trains, buses and light rail; or Develop communities where people do not have to drive long distances to work or shop.”

Of these choices, the largest proportion of Americans—47 percent—believe that public transportation is the best long-term solution for managing congestion. Next was developing communities where less driving was needed, with 28 percent of respondents believing this would be most effective. Last came road building, with only 21 percent support. Most people do not think road building is an effective way to fight congestion; 75 percent see other strategies as more effective.

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“How much confidence do you have in each of the following to make the best decisions on land use issues affecting your area? Do you have a great deal, some, not very much or very little confidence in . . .”



Finally, people were asked: “How much confidence do you have in each of the following to make the best decisions on land use issues affecting your area? Do you have a great deal, some, not very much or very little confidence in ” (see chart).

These results show that Americans have confidence in community groups, local and state government, and somewhat less confidence in the federal government when it comes to growth issues. And although more people lacked confidence in the federal government than had confidence, the gap was a relatively small at 6 percentage points. A majority of respondents, 61 percent, have little confidence in the ability of developers to deal with these problems in a responsible fashion.



Most Important Local Issue

“Now, what do you think is the most important problem facing the community where you live?”

- 18% Development/Sprawl/Traffic/Roads
- 18% Crime/Violence
- 13% Economic Issues/The Economy
- 10% Education
- 6% Child and Teen Issues
- 3% Problems with Politics/Politicians
- 3% Moral Decline/Decline of Family Values
- 2% Racism/Discrimination/Intolerance
- 2% Problems with Immigrants
- 2% The Environment
- 2% Law Enforcement/Justice/Court System
- 1% Health/Medicine
- 1% Poverty/Hunger/Homelessness
- 1% Natural Disasters/Hurricanes/Floods
- 1% Senior Citizen Issues/Care of the Elderly
- 4% Other
- 16% Things are Good Here/Don't Know



STRAIGHT TALK FROM AMERICANS—2000

Other opinion polls confirm Americans' new concerns about growth and sprawl. The Pew Center for Civic Journalism, a non-partisan research and education organization, has commissioned a series of opinion polls for its Straight Talk 2000 project. The results shown at the left come from interviews taken during the period October 6 through October 31, 1999 with a representative sample of 1,004 adults over the age of 18. In the words of the Pew Center:

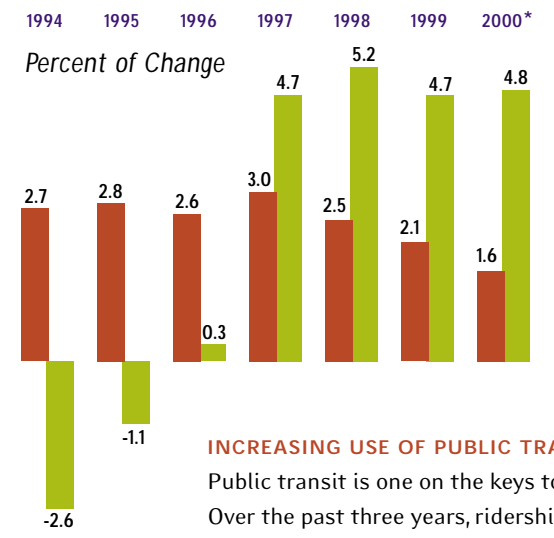
“The complex of issues known as sprawl, growth, traffic, roads and infrastructure are a top concern, with 18 percent mentioning the issue. This cluster of issues is quite diverse, but all focus on the impact of growth and development on the daily lives of individuals. Whether it is traffic congestion, poorly-maintained roads, inadequate sewer and water or crowded schools, all the complaints focus on the quality of life that is endangered as the local infrastructure fails to keep pace with growth and development.”

The Pew poll found that sprawl is more of a problem for those in the suburbs than anywhere else. Twenty-six percent of those who live in the suburbs ranked sprawl-related issues as the most important local matter, well above the nationwide average of 18 percent.

The significance of this cannot be overstated. In the past some critics have labeled advocates for smarter growth as urban elitists who lack sympathy for the tastes and preferences of people who choose to live in the suburbs. This unfair characterization can now be put to rest; suburbanites who have daily, first-hand experience with the problems caused by sprawl are actually more concerned about its impacts on quality of life than other segments of society.

Public Transit is Booming Annual Growth in Driving and Transit Use

■ Driving (miles of travel) ■ Transit Use (boardings)



INCREASING USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transit is one on the keys to smart growth. Over the past three years, ridership on trains, buses and light rail has been increasing rapidly. Total transit use grew 15.3 percent over this period, from 7.9 billion boardings in 1996 to almost 9.1 billion in 1999. Since 1997, transit use has grown at almost double the rate of driving; total vehicle miles of travel grew by just 7.8 percent. As the figure above shows, transit boardings have grown by close to five percent per year since 1997, while growth in miles driven slowed each year. In 1999, transit ridership reached the highest level recorded by the transit industry since 1960. The latest results available, for the first quarter 2000, show this trend continuing. Ridership was up 4.8 percent over the same period in the previous year.



Ridership is increasing on all forms of transit, including buses, subway systems, commuter trains and trolleys. And growth in the first quarter of 2000 was strong throughout the U.S. Bus systems with strong growth in ridership included Fort Myers, FL (up 20.4 percent), Grand Rapids, MI (up 11.5 percent), Phoenix, AZ (up 10.6 percent) and Salt Lake City, UT (up 20.9 percent). Train systems with strong ridership growth included BART in San Francisco (up 15.6 percent), New York City's subways (up 8.8 percent) and the Washington, DC Metro (up 8.5 percent).

This strong reversal of past trends reflects Americans' changing attitudes. People are voting with their feet, and increasingly they are voting for transit.

VOTERS ARE SUPPORTING SMARTER GROWTH

On November 3, 1998, people in 31 states voted on 240 ballot initiatives to preserve land, improve water quality, protect wildlife, and otherwise implement smart growth. This was a more than 50 percent increase over the number of measures identified in a survey of 1996 ballot measures. Voters approved 72 percent of the smart growth initiatives that made it to the ballot in 1998. Taken together, these measures are generating more than \$7.5 billion in state and local spending on land conservation and smart growth programs. On the 1999 off-year election ballots, voters nationwide considered 135 measures and approved an even higher percentage of them—77 percent.

Many ballot initiatives relating to conservation and smart growth appear on ballots in 2000, including referenda on growth management proposals in at least two states, Arizona and Colorado. For up-to-date information on these and other ballot proposals go to www.smartgrowthamerica.com.

Source: Pew Center for Civic Journalism
<http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj/spotlight/displaySpotlight.php3?id=28>